

## STROKE

Factsheet | HGIC 4366 | **Revised:** May 10, 2020

A stroke is a “brain attack” in which blood flow to the brain is cut off either by a blockage a blood vessel rupture. Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in America. Stroke prevalence and death rate is on the decline in America, but someone still has a stroke every 40 seconds.

### Recognizing a Stroke: Think F.A.S.T.

The key to surviving a stroke and minimizing damage is fast action

- **F**-Facial drooping, ask the person to smile, if one side of the face droops, they may be having a stroke
- **A**-Arms, ask the person to lift both arms, see if one arm falls or is unable to lift
- **S**-slurred speech, ask the person a simple question, see if speech is slurred when they answer
- **T**-time, if any one or multiple of these symptoms are seen, call 911.

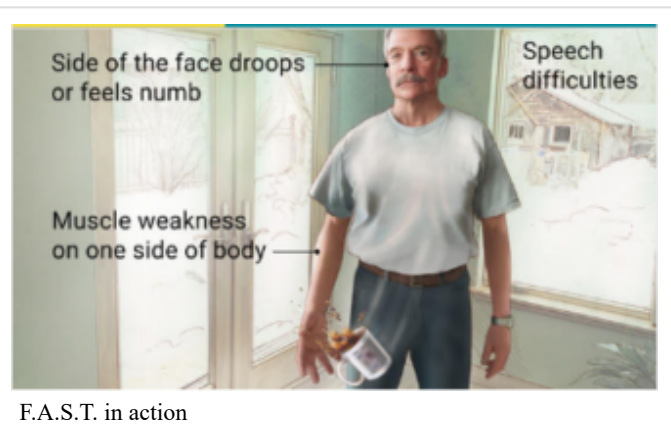
### Who is at Risk for a Stroke?

Everyone is at risk for a stroke, especially at an advanced age. Men are more likely to have strokes than women, but women are more likely to die of a stroke than are men. African Americans have the greatest risk of stroke, though Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans are also at an increased risk of stroke over Caucasians. Other risk factors for stroke include high blood pressure, diabetes, overweight, smoking, excess alcohol intake, and poor diet.

### Are There Different Types of Stroke?

There are two different types of stroke: Ischemic and Hemorrhagic. There are different subcategories of both of these, as well as a “mini stroke” known as a Transient Ischemic Accident.

**Ischemic Stroke:** An ischemic stroke is stroke that results from a blockage, and is the most common type of stroke, with 87% of all cases being Ischemic. That blockage can come from two different ways: either a blood clot in the brain, as is the case with an embolic stroke, or as a result of plaque buildup and a blood clot in the artery, as is the case with a thrombotic stroke. A TIA is very similar to an Ischemic Stroke, but the blockage is temporary and can fix itself. However, immediate medical attention is still necessary as a TIA can be a warning sign of a full blown stroke.



**Hemorrhagic Stroke:** A hemorrhagic stroke is much rarer than an Ischemic stroke, and results from a blood vessel in the brain rupturing, which interrupts the supply of blood to other parts of the brain. An intracerebral hemorrhagic stroke occurs when

the rupture occurs within the brain and a subarachnoid hemorrhagic stroke occurs when the rupture is in the tissue surrounding the brain.

## Treatment

Type of treatment will also depend on the type of stroke which must be determined by a doctor at a hospital. For an ischemic stroke, one will be given a clot busting drug or a blood thinner in order to remove the clot. For a hemorrhagic stroke, one may be given a medication to reduce blood pressure and prevent seizures following the incident. Any indication of stroke should be considered an emergency and handled by medical professionals.

**Recovery:** Following a stroke, you may be recommended for physical rehabilitation to regain strength and movement, occupational therapy to relearn to dress, walk, and eat, or speech therapy to regain speech patterns. You may also be placed on drugs to prevent another clot, as well as receive recommended lifestyle changes, including a diet lower in fat and sodium or weight loss.

## Prevention

Strokes are prevented in the same ways many other chronic conditions are prevented. Eating a healthier diet, one that contains many fruits and vegetables and less solid fats and salts, helps to prevent strokes. More physical activity will also help lower the risk of a stroke. Smoking and use of tobacco products should be discontinued entirely to prevent stroke. If you consume alcohol, have no more than one standard drink a day for women or no more than two standard drinks a day to reduce stroke risk. If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, do your best to manage it according to your doctor's orders.

## Additional Resources

The National Stroke Association has a number of fact sheets and additional educational resources available from: <http://www.stroke.org/stroke-resources>. As with any medical condition, you can consult your doctor for any additional information.

### Sources

1. "Stroke." *Www.google.com/search?q=Stroke* (n.d.): n. pag. 17 Aug. 2016. Web. 30 Sept. 2016.
2. "US National Stroke Association Guide to Choosing Rehabilitation Services." *PharmacoEconomics & Outcomes News* 206.1 (1999): 4. *Stroke.org*. National Stroke Association. Web. 30 Sept. 2016.
3. "Preventing a Stroke." *Stroke.org*. National Stroke Association, 23 May 2016. Web. 30 Sept. 2016.
4. "What Is Stroke?" *Stroke.org*. National Stroke Association, 16 Mar. 2016. Web. 30 Sept. 2016.

*Originally published 10/16*

If this document didn't answer your questions, please contact HGIC at [hgic@clemson.edu](mailto:hgic@clemson.edu) or 1-888-656-9988.

## Original Author(s)

**Shana Madden**, Extension Agent - Associate, Clemson University

## Revisions by:

**Logan McFall**, Health Extension Agent, Oconee County, Clemson Extension

*This information is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement of brand names or registered trademarks by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is implied, nor is any discrimination intended by the exclusion of products or manufacturers not named. All recommendations are for South Carolina conditions and may not apply to other areas. Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. All*

*recommendations for pesticide use are for South Carolina only and were legal at the time of publication, but the status of registration and use patterns are subject to change by action of state and federal regulatory agencies. Follow all directions, precautions and restrictions that are listed.*

---

Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.

Copyright © 2023 Clemson University  
Clemson Cooperative Extension | 103 Barre Hall Clemson, SC 29634  
**864-986-4310 | 1-888-656-9988** (SC residents only) | [HGIC@clemson.edu](mailto:HGIC@clemson.edu)